ADAPTATIONS OF PROSPER MÉRIMÉE’S “THE BEAR” IN DIFFERENT MEDIA AND GENRES: CORRECTION AND RECONTEXTUALIZATION

Summary. Adaptation research demonstrates that the narrative of a particular work may be transferred to different media and/or contexts. In the analysis of such adaptations, it is possible to observe that in the context of both cinema and theatre, the often debated discourses around the connection between literature and its adaptations in another media, are dialogical and conflicting. Although these discussions still dominate many texts, a considerable number of researchers agree that there are significant connections between adaptations of the same work and the original narrative. For example, Regina Schober describes adaptations as the process of emerging relationships. Such a definition refers both to the relationship between the literary source and its adaptation to another medium, and the relationships between other adaptations created in the same or different media. The definition also encompasses the possibilities of narrative transformation in different cultural contexts. Prosper Mérimée’s work – the short story “The Bear”, in which 19th century Lithuania is reflected by combining fiction and reality – was selected for detailed investigation. The selected adaptations include, on the Lithuanian theatre stage, the opera “The Bear” (2000) created by composer Bronius Kutavičius and director Jonas Jurašas, and Łukasz Twarkowski’s “Lokis” (2017), staged at the drama theatre. The opera includes important additions to the short story. The adaptation by Łukasz Twarkowski and playwright Anka Herbut of the stage performance presents the idea of Mérimée’s work in today’s context, combining it with real stories of artists of our time. Two of the listed adaptations of “The Bear”, representing different genres – opera and contemporary drama theatre, as well as the relationship with the original text – became the objects of further research analysis. These case studies explore the use of media tools in the interpretation of the textual narrative, assess each adaptation within the overall field of previously produced adaptations, and seek to decipher the intertexts, and to notice the connections (as well as the differences).

Keywords: adaptation, Prosper Mérimée, theatre, opera, intermediality, intertextuality.

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORETICAL CONTEXT

In this research, based on Hutcheon’s idea that adaptation primarily means to adapt, it is assumed that adaptation is a term that combines all possible cases of adaptation of a work(s) (regardless of whether the process takes place in the same or another media). In other words, the term adaptation is perceived as encompassing all other concepts that attempt to define specific cases (from consistent narrative tracking – faithful transformation to complete distance from the adapted text – deconstruction, analogy). In poststructuralism, Barthes’ refined idea of the “author’s death” strongly influenced the representatives of adaptations: creators and theorists. The author’s renunciation of his power as a center of significance allowed the representatives of other media greater freedom in the expression of creative solutions and the forms of a particular media. The changes in the position of the writer-author also determined the changes in the analysis of adaptation when methods and approaches other than a one-sided comparison with the original text were sought.

The range of evaluative criteria for adaptations created in different media include transferring the...
The analysis of adaptations usually focuses on issues of whether an adaptation is an independent work, that is, whether it can be understood apart from the work from which it is created. In other cases, whether the adaptation of a work changes the main elements, whether intertexts are inserted into the new material and their sources, and whether intentions and motives related to the creator of the adaptation are usually sought. In other words, narrative analysis is used in almost all cases of more in-depth research, which becomes the basis for the inclusion of complementary methods and tools.

When analyzing adaptations, intertextuality and intermediality as theoretical approaches allow for insights and generate conversations about the references recorded in the new work including quotations not only from literary works, but also from other genres. In the context of adaptations, deconstruction is considered both a phenomenon and a concept. Firstly, the interpretation of a literary work and its transfer to another medium when the prevailing interpretations are "destroyed". Secondly, the concept of deconstruction based on the idea that to deconstruct is to "dismantle" something, for example, to show (co)creation mechanisms. Thomas Leitch included in his classification the type of adaptations he named metacommentary or deconstruction. He based this classification on the example of Jonze’s film “Adaptation” (2002), which reflected the complicated processes of creating adaptation.

A further important approach is that of intercultural perspective, which often begins with the author of the work. What is important is the author’s context, the contextuality of the work itself, i.e., whether the work relates to that of a specific period, and/or various geographical, cultural, or spatial features, and whether the work claims versatility. One of the most striking examples in the general history of culture as well as in the context of adaptation, are adaptations of dramaturgy created in different periods, as well as in different media and cultural spaces, which allow for different perspectives and interpretations of the directors. A similar possibility is afforded to most of the foremost creators of Western literature. In adaptation studies, the intercultural perspective allows for a broader study of the multifaceted nature of a literary work and the possibility of interpretations within various contexts.

In addition to the methods of analysis employed, an important tool in adaptation research is the classification of adaptations. Classifications make it possible to define directing strategies in terms of concepts. The terms employed by the Dudley Andrew and Thom Leitch classifications are used in this research. According to Andrew, if we limit ourselves to the cases of adaptation in which a literary work is valued as an original source, there are several possible ways to describe the connection between film and text: borrowing, intersection, and fidelity of transformation.2 Summarizing Andrew’s ideas, it can be said that the borrowing category of adaptation should have such features (not necessarily all) as following the narrative of the original work, insertion of new ideas, new authors, highlighting one or other aspects of the work. Such adaptations should not manifestly contradict the ideas of the original text. Works attributed to intersecting adaptations should discuss, oppose the original text, deconstruct it, change the context, present views, and meanings, and create a visually contradictory, contrasting new text. Fidelity of transformation should focus on the transfer of the original work to another medium with all the features: visual elements, narrative, symbols, meanings, hard-to-define spirit of the work, and author’s style.

Leitch looks at the process of adaptation in great detail, analyzing the relationship between adaptations and the literary text, proposing various concepts to define and concretize these connections. One group of concepts is more closely related to the
context, to the author’s preferences in building the work (desire to express respect for a valuable work; new technical possibilities that allow the work to be conveyed in another medium). Next, it could be related to the director’s aspirations to change, to supplement the literary work by adapting it in other media. The third deals with the new text, the internal structure of the adaptation, the links with previous texts (allusions, intertexts, etc.).

Methods employed in this case research include narrative analysis; comparative analysis; intertextual (and intermedial) analysis; and deconstruction access. Relevant to the research is Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of dialogicity, Irina O. Rajewsky’s definition of intertextuality, and Julia Kristeva’s development of the concept that any text can be intertextual and cannot exist in isolation from the cultural, historical context. Intermediate access uses the insights of Werner Wolff, Irina Melnikova, and cultural environment media, encompassing all possible connections.3

The aim of this case study is to analyze in detail two adaptations of the same work, revealing adaptation strategies at the levels of media change and cultural context. Mérimée’s work – the short story “The Bear”, in which 19th century Lithuania is reflected by combining fiction and reality, was selected for detailed investigation. This work, in different periods, received the attention of a variety of film and theatre artists from different countries. For this reason, the adaptations reveal not only individual permutations of the directors’ interpretations, but may also demonstrate the relationship to Lithuania and the historical region of Samogitia.

The case studies establish the relationship with the original text; explore the use of media tools in the interpretation of the textual narrative; seek to decipher the intertexts, to notice the connections (as well as the differences); to show the (in) universality of the narrative created by the writer to adapt to different media, and historical periods.

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE AND “THE BEAR”

Prosper Mérimée (1803–1870), was a French writer, author of very diverse fictional works of different genres, as well as interested in researching theoretical issues of art and history and interpreting them in his work. He was interested in Lithuania, Samogitia, and its language and customs. These themes were reflected in 1869 in the work “The Bear” (orig. “Lokis”, original title “Lokis. Manuscript by Professor Whitembach”). Many of Mérimée’s works have been translated into Lithuanian.

“The Bear” was adapted for cinema and theatre stage. According to Theatrologist Rasa Vasinuskaitė, “The romantic and mystifier Mérimée combined various genres here – from naturalism to mysticism, from melodrama to horror, from romance to tragedy, in order to visually and cleverly demonstrate the effects of name-word etymology on man. ... The name of Count Šemeta, the protagonist of the short story, is, in other words, the bear. As a result, he is either a bear or behaves like a bear, and a beastly nature is constantly awakening in him.”4

One of the first adaptations of “The Bear” was a silent film “The Marriage of the Bear” (“Медведья свадьба”, 1925) by Russian directors Konstantin Eggert and Vladimir Gardin, based on an adaptation of a play written by Anatoly Lunacharski predicated on a work by Mérimée. Another adaptation by Polish director Janusz Majewski is the film “’The Bear’ with a script by Professor Wittembach” (“Lokis. Rękopis Professor Wittembacha”, 1970), which focuses on the consistent transformation of Mérimée’s work into film. Walerian Borowczyk’s adaptation of “The Beast” (1975), according to the creators, represents the genre of erotic horror film, as well as having allusions to the fairy tale “The Beauty and the Beast” written by the French writer Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve almost a century ago. A different adaptation created by Belarusian director Andrey Kudinenko, “Massacre” (“Масакра”, 2010), proposed another genre closer to popular cinema: the mystical thriller.
On the Lithuanian theatre stage, composer Bronius Kutavičius and director Jonas Jurašas created the opera “The Bear” (2000), and Łukasz Twarkowski staged “Lokis” (2017) at the drama theatre. The opera includes important additions to the short story while Twarkowski and playwright Anka Herbut’s stage performance presented the idea of Mérimée’s work in today’s context, combining it with real stories of artists of our time. Two of the listed adaptations of “The Bear”, representing different genres – opera and contemporary drama theatre, as well as the relationship with the original text, became the objects of further research analysis. Literary scholar Kęstutis Nastopka, who consulted the Twarkowski’s playwright Herbut, states, “Having conceived ‘The Bear’ as an antiphrase of terrible stories that were read in the salon of Empress Eugenia, wife of Napoleon III, and chosen Samogitia as an exotic corner of Europe known only from hearsay, the French romantic and mystifier Prosper Mérimée ... was seriously interested in the ‘local coloring’ of this region – language, ethnography, the past. In one of his correspondences, the author wrote, ‘The whole problem is that soon this story seemed quite attractive to me and, instead of drawing a caricature, I wanted to paint a portrait of the impossible’. Mérimée’s work depicts the duality of man (being), unfolding in a more mythical than historical context of Lithuania, and was adapted by different directors choosing various aspects, changing the points of view, interpreting, supplementing and even correcting the author’s narrative.

ADAPTATION BY BRONIUS KUTAVIČIUS, JONAS JURAŠAS, AUŠRA MARIJA SLUCKAITĖ-JURAŠIENĖ: RENEWAL OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

On June 25 2000, the premiere of the opera “The Bear” took place on the stage of the Lithuanian Opera and Ballet Theater. The two-act contemporary opera is a work to which a large creative team contributed: the author of the libretto, Aušra Marija Sluckaitė-Jurašienė, the composer Bronius Kutavičius, and the director Jonas Jurašas. The unique interpretation of the text created by the three authors is closest to the mythological genre, although the authors themselves more often emphasize the intention of the romantic drama when talking about this opera. “The libretto is surrounded by mystical mists, nobility, somewhat romanticized Samogitia, an area of old customs, magic and myths, against the background of which there is a drama of thickened colors. ... I used the motifs of Mérimée’s novel for the plot, but I focused on the theme of love and destiny typical of romantic operas.” According to theatrologist Rasa Vasin-auskaite, director Jurašas sought to bring the opera closer to the (sometimes psychological, sometimes expressionist or natural) manner of acting typical of drama theater.

The adaptation of Mérimée’s text in the libretto was not a direct, one-way process. Author Sluckaitė-Jurašienė wrote an adaptation of the same work in a drama play a few years before the work on the opera began. In the stage adaptation of ”Lokis”, only the fundamental elements of the narrative structure of the work remain: the plot, the main events and characters, and conditionally, space-time. Without contradicting the logic of the narrative, in some places the actions and conversations of the characters are interchangeable. In the adaptation, the main storyline becomes the duality of the human-beast. The amended conclusion of the writer’s text indicates the open endedness of the story, in which the count’s future fate remains unknown whereas in the opera, he is destroyed by a bullet fired by the Countess. For these reasons, using Wagner’s classification, the adaptation can be attributed to the category of analogy that defines the position of an autonomous work of art that seeks adaptation.

The opera alters the images of the characters formed by the writer and, one might say, abandons the layer of the work that reflected the writer’s understanding (imagining) of Lithuania of that time as a wild, uncivilized country. In this adaptation, the opposite is true. Thanks to the decisions of the librettist and the costume designer Sandra Straukaitė, we see a rather elegant image of the Lithuanian characters of the time. In Mérimée’s novella, despite the fact that the work itself was not categorized as
a documentary work or testimony, descriptions of space-time, was analyzed several times in various discourses precisely to convey Lithuanian traditions and customs, almost always emphasizing the discrepancy between the features and phenomena he named, and the reality of the time.

Such circumstances suggest the conclusion that the amendment of the work in this adaptation, using Leitch’s terms, can be attributed to the category of corrections. The librettist replaced what was considered by the creative team to be flaws; inconsistencies in the original.

According to Andrew’s classification, this stage adaptation can claim both the category of borrowing and intersection. Arguments attesting to the category borrowing include the observation that Mérimée’s storytelling, characters, and main ideas, do not conflict with the central theme of duality of the human personality. However, the changes implemented and the critical positioning of the Samogitian cultural landscape depicted by the writer, suggest that the adaptation of the original text is characteristic of the category intersection.

Like the the librettist, the entire creative team took a similar position in relation to how our country was reflected in the work. In a number of texts accompanying the premiere, similar statements can be found, indicating the composer was alien to the conflict between civilization and paganism depicted in the novel. For him, the theme of love and destiny became more important, bringing “The Bear” closer in its own way to the plots of romantic operas. The first statement can be agreed to only partially as in the texts, dialogues and visual decisions of the performers can be seen a number of references to the relationship between the civilized world and paganism, in some cases as the intersection of paganism (as representing the uncivilized past) and Christianity (the more progressive environment of the count). For example, after Professor Vitembach’s account of strange things that happened at night, Count Šemeta describes the situation quite ironically with the statement, “pagan gods stayed here ...”.

Changes in the narrative structure of the original text also led to changes in the characters and functions of the characters. Professor Vitembach’s role as an enthusiastic researcher of the Samogitia region is suppressed by emphasizing his voice as the narrator of a tragic story, focusing more on Count Šemeta himself. In the opinion of Kutavičius, each person has a little of this duality in himself. This is strongly emphasized in this story. During the day, a person is one thing, at night it is different. In addition to the above mentioned intersection of cultures and religions, this adaptation highlights the second theme – attention to human duality, expressed precisely through the figure of the count.

Musicologist Inga Jasinskaitė-Jankauskiene states, "When writing the opera, the composer sought to give her the features of the dynamics of the action, to maintain the pace. As one of the means to achieve this goal, the opera uses the change of narrative roles of the same character. For example, the choir (as well as the professor's character) has a dual narrative function: mimesis, i.e., to participate in the action, and a diego-based narrative, i.e., to comment on events.”

Jurašas, without abandoning his characteristic principles of directing, also pays much attention to detail in the opera, seeking to create not types, but live characters, whose images, compared with Mérimée’s work, also alter. The characters created
in the adaptation, it can be said, become the equal of the main characters of Count Šemeta (Vytautas Juozapaitis) and Professor (Vladmiras Prudnikovas), a bigger voice is given to other characters of the story.

The character named one-eyed Old Woman, whose role was created by Veronika Povilionienė, is being re-created and newly interpreted. Mérimée’s Old Woman who performed only an episodic role in the text, in the adaptation became much more significant forest creature who did more than pronounce short predictions of the future. This character, through repeated use of magical incantations, in addition to the already named symbol of paganism, becomes a connection between the ordinary world and the mythical, mystical forest space. The duo, created by an old and silent Servant of the Manor (Česlovas Stonys), represents the outcast participants of history, the only ones who know the history that has taken place and anticipate the tragedy of the future, but are not listened to nor heard by anyone. Professor Vitembach is left in the position of an intellectual narrator who reflects and comments on the events taking place. The image of the doctor created by Andrius Rubežiaus, and his experiences on the battlefield, are based on physical disability and he takes a stronger position on all issues taking place in the manor. In order to emphasize human duality even more strongly, the role of Count Šemeta is created by two performers – Vytautas Juozapaitis and Mindaugas Žemaitis. According to Jurašas, “We all carry with us the burden of the beast hidden under our polite posture and mask. The role of the double is very important here. ... The second self who holds up and says, ‘Don’t do this’ And that other one of us sometimes breaks out like that count.” The Graph Double (Mindaugas Žemaitis) character appears in only a few scenes, the count created by Juozapaitis, representing the beastly principle, dominates.

The Old Countess (Inesa Linaburgytė) is given the opportunity to become more involved and react to the decisions made by the count, but in this work she is not enabled to change them. The Count’s Fiancée Julia (Irena Zelenkauskaitė-Brazauskienė) traditionally the role of a rather passive character, becomes more suggestive, lively, seeking to change the count’s moods. The opera places great emphasis on the dramatic monologues and the dialogues between the count and his fiancée. In these particularly theatrical scenes, complex arias that evoke a tragic feeling are sung and the romantic atmosphere emphasized by the librettist is kindled.

The musical works and their combinations selected do not signify the desire to recreate the time and space as described by the writer. On the contrary, an attempt is made to achieve at least two important goals. Firstly, to move the work and its theme to the level of universality and secondly, to suggest connections between Mérimée’s historical figures and other cultural contexts. “The composer travels different musical epochs and cultures in his favorite way. In the opera stylization of archaic Lithuanian convention, Klaipėda regional folk songs, Protestant chorale, polonaise, and 18th century opera recitative, are organically compared with the composer’s stylistic idioms. The variety of musical material is connected to depict the collision of real and unreal worlds.”

Jasinskaitė-Jankauskienė takes the position that this adaptation of “The Bear” still reflects the intersection of two cultures/religions: among the most characteristic features of the opera are the artistic opposition of the binary opposition “nature-culture” and the opposition of two cultures – Christian and pagan.” “The beginning of nature here consists of pagan opera motifs and mysterious, even mystical characters.” One of the most prominent roles is played by one-eyed Old Woman (Povilionienė). “In the first action, the future is gathering: At night the sheep are enough and I read the future from the ashes. [...] Cast in the silver, and I will tell the whole truth. “The strange-sounding words of the Ancient (‘Terrible thirst and pernicious’) and the enigmatic prohibitions (‘I say, don’t turn right, betray your tribe’) speak of the terrible fate of the Count and Julia. For the musical design of this scene, the composer employed women’s and
men’s choir groups supported by skudučiai (multi-pipe flute). The pagan line of the plot for the Old Woman is extended and emphasized by the choir, which insistently repeats (here repetitive technique prevails) as if under a spell: ‘Bear with Bear’ – both good as such.”13

In the second action, according to the author, the character’s communication with the extraterrestrial world is clear. “The old words: the rulers of the dungeon are waiting for you, are accompanied by brass instruments. They sound grotesque, dancing to the beat. Everything here seems to spin and be seen as if in a distorted mirror. This shows the narrative role entrusted to the instruments by the narrator of the ‘all-knowing’ author (Genette’s term) and the evaluator of events. The choir is also an active commentator on events in this scene.”14

Jurašas, working with the composer Kutavičius, stated that he sought the greatest possible naturalness and inclusion of theatrical language in the opera. “The composer admits that intonation material was especially important to him when writing the opera. He sought to avoid any intonational stereotypes in Lithuanian or modern operas. In search of the ‘truth’ of intonation, he tested dozens of harmonies that could reveal the emotional nuances of situations. Such an individual voice, the manner of intonation, was first sought by the heroes of the opera, who are connected with the powers of the mythological world – Count Šemeta, his fiancée Julia, and the one-eyed Old Woman. The fragility of the real world is reflected in the stylized intonations of the Doctor, Professor and Maršalka.”15

The collage of the music used in the opera varied from the polonaise played on the wedding stage to the sounds of the harpsichord accompanying the official words of Maršalka (Arūnas Malikėnas) and the evangelical chant used in the ceremony for the Samogitian orientations; the style of folk musicians is noticeable.16

This adaptation of “The Bear” not only offers one interpretation of Mérimée’s work, but also points to certain challenges facing typical operas staged twenty years ago, and highlights the changes in the work of composer Kutavičius. “The paintings and musical language of the old man, the mad Countess and the Count, reminiscent of the famous ‘pagan’ oratorios of B. Kutavičius <...>, can be related to the archaic, pagan, pantheistic level of nature in the opera from the famous ‘nature-culture’ of C. Levi-Strauss opposition. This layer of ‘nature’ in B. Kutavičius’ “The Bear’ is in contrast to traditional opera with its characteristic ‘cultural’ attributes.”17

According to Jasinskaitė-Jankauskienė, the quality of “culture” described is that of the traditional interpretation of opera in which the characteristic elements are singers, choristers, a symphony orchestra, and ballet dancers. In this case, the performers of the opera performed recitatives, which became a common element of the work, as opposed to the more usual connecting segments. Speaking about such a choice, Kutavičius emphasized that “the tension of action significantly wins in vocal parts by using recitation-arios singing.”18

The visual component of the opera foregrounds several aspects: firstly, the revelation of human duality – the human-beast through the figure of Count Šemeta and his dramatic history; secondly, the intersection of two worlds-cultures/religions. The scenography was created by the sculptor Mindaugas Navakas, who in this production made his theater debut. “The chosen minimalist, laconic, the important element of the stage is the black and white carpet, the sloping rise.”19 The moderate use of props, just a few items – a chair, swings, canvas used in the procession, and some artifacts mark the depicted culture. In the opera, the visual accents – the characters that complement the narrative, and signify symbolic values, were used to highlight projections that several decades ago were technically too difficult. “Significant comments from the scenographer Navakas suggest that, for example, gastronomic and gastroanatomical images projected on the depths of the stage and later examples of flora and fauna; pseudo-archaic masks and skulls; pigeon feathers, etc. act as information: for example, the dinner scene is ‘switched’ to a view of gastronomic and gastroanatomical markers.”20

These images, can be divided into several groups of opposites: some of them signify life, others create a
sense of death, a tragic end, still others present the details of the past.

The scenography and the costume designs contributed to a more efficient realization of the altered resolution of the work. As the tragic event approached, Straukaitė decided to modify the image of the count – his costume more closely resembled that of the famous character Dracula. Navakas’ scene of the Count’s death, when he was shot by his mother, was extremely impressive. According to musicologist Janatjeva, “<...> the finale, when the mother shoots her son and he hangs on the rising video screen, became one of the most grotesque scenes in the play”.21

The transformation of Mérimée’s work into a modern opera becomes critical to the manner in which the 19th century Samogitian is depicted. The adaptation is not intended to historically reconstruct the image of the land described in the work, but Mérimée’s abandonment of the depiction of the wild land, attributing all strange traditions and customs only to pagan heritage (and several characters who reflect this), testifies to the writer’s image of Samogitia. The adaptation shows the separation of what we consider to be a dramatic story and a mythological narrative, the two narratives being linked through a count figure, whose psychological state is not sufficiently explained by the arguments of the rational world.

ŁUKASZ TWARKOWSKI’S ADAPTATION: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FICTIONAL NARRATIVE AND REAL EVENTS

An adaptation called “Lokis”, by Polish director Łukasz Twarkowski and playwright Anka Herbut was created in 2017 and premiered on September 14 on the stage of the Lithuanian National Drama Theater. In this adaptation, Mérimée’s work becomes one of the three sources from which a new narrative is constructed. The literary work is combined with the biographies of two artists: Bertrand Cantat and Vitas Luckus.

The work represents post-dramatic theater. Firstly, it manifests itself through the relationship with the verbal text, which becomes only one of the components: “In postdramatic forms of theatre, staged text (if text is staged) is merely a component with equal rights in a gestic, musical, visual, etc., total composition.”22 The intermediality of the work, based on a non-illustrative task, “[...] is characterized not so much by the use of media technologies as by the aesthetics of the performance they inspire.”23

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In several interviews, Twarkowski mentions the desire to create a psychological thriller in the theater. There are three murder stories in the play that have no clear motive: In 1869 in Mérimée’s work, a woman was killed by a man (or a beast – a bear); in 2003 actress Marie Trintignant was assasinated by singer Bertrand Cantat and in 1987 photojournalist Bronius Krakauskas was stabbed by photographer Vitas Luckus during an altercation. Combining these complex, controversial stories by using a synthesis of different arts and abandoning the traditional hierarchy of performance elements creates an impression of the thriller genre.
Another keyword of the performance is mentioned by both the director and the playwright – the concept of post-truth. In the opinion of Herbut, “The Mérimée strategy seems to me to be very close to the phenomenon of post-truths, which has a very strong impact on the media, society and culture today. After all, we are not talking about whether something is true or not, but about whether someone will believe it to be true. About the emotional strain that make convincing what is true and what is not. On the ways of manipulating material.”

In an intertextual adaptation of Mérimée’s work created by Herbut and Twarkowski, only the main plot is borrowed from the author’s text. Some characters are changed, but everything is changed by integrating other material, thereby employing Wagner’s analogy, which includes authorial, autonomous adaptations of works. The same goes for Andrew’s intersection, as the new narrative, created from three different materials, transforms all elements of Mérimée’s work. The stage performance of media can also be described using the concept of deconstruction. It should be noted that this concept is associated in this case with Leitch’s category of adaptation, also termed deconstruction (although in his case applied more broadly). The category proposed by the author defines adaptations which depict the process of creating an adaptation itself, and in the case of this work, includes not only the deconstruction of a literary work, but also the deconstruction of the whole narrative and the performance itself in the creation of a stage work. The adaptation combines the biographies of real artists (or rather, the stories constructed from them) with Mérimée’s work. All the stories are connected by a place (events took place in Lithuania) and a cruel crime – murder, which has no precise explanation, is shrouded in myth and various interpretations. The plot of the original work is narrowed leaving only a small part of it, but at the same time Mérimée’s idea of the dualism of the human and the beastly beginning is highlighted and strengthened by the tragedies of real people.

All three stories are not organically combined into one coherent plot or narrative – just narrated in parallel. This is achieved by combining stories and characters, then separating them and focusing on the hero of one story. However, all these stories can be assigned, at least in relative terms, certain distinct functions that help to preserve the basic ideas of the performance. The story of Vito Luckus is based on the idea that “the image is everything”, this statement is repeated orally, heard and visually conveyed many times, and also reflects the form of the performance, in which the images also create a narrative without compromising other elements of the performance. Mérimée’s work functions as a particular symbol of the beast lurking in every human being; a fear, and at the same time an instinct that the heroes of these stories are unable to control. Cantat’s crime seems to have been chosen for a deeper analysis: the stage attempts to recreate the events and determine the location of the crime. It can be argued that Count Šemeta is a symbolic figure of beastliness, Luckus is like a filter, which is used to demonstrate the mismatch between images and reality and the possibility of manipulating our understanding and beliefs through the image i.e., the photographs, and the story reconstructed by Cantat become a generalizing narrative of a heinous crime.

There are no complicated conclusions explaining the stories in the play, but one of the last dialogues sounds like a summary of the problem under analysis. Luckus and Cantat talk about the inability to control oneself and not to cross that thin line between thoughts and actions. The driving force of the plot of the work becomes the personality involved in the marginal state of affect.

A large team of actors was assigned a difficult task – to alter the characters several times, and to understand their complicated story. At the beginning of the performance, the actors introduce themselves as a creative team. Watching the performance at least a few times can capture the reaction of the audience, emphasizing that it is not clear to everyone that these actors, directors, and playwrights are not real. The main stories of the heroes are briefly presented, as if the behind-the-scenes creative processes are opened.
The viewer is invited to see a set which depicts a room with minimal household elements and corridors that lead nowhere, reminiscent of a maze. Perhaps this is a reference to confusing, unexplained stories waiting for the audience. The role of the composer Bogumil Misala is important in the performance in which the viewer is also offered an interactive experience initiated by pressing the buttons, supposedly creating music. However, this is not a real construction of the play, but just one of many ways to try to demonstrate how easy it is to manipulate us.

Almost all the actors were required to create more than one role, and to do so not only in a precise and consistent order, but to be in charge of controlling several different actors throughout the performance. For example, Airida Gintautaitė was given the task of being Giedre Kriaucionyte, an assistant director in the introduction to the performance and slightly later, the wife of Cantat, Marie Trintignant, the victim of the crime. Darius Gumauskas was given the roles of Cantat, Wittembach and the set designer Fabien Lede. Rytis Saladžius became both choreographer Pawel Sakowicz and Count Šemeta. Vainis Sodeika played the role of Vitas Luckus and Professor Wittembach 2, as well as the position of director Lukasz Twarkowski at the beginning of the performance. In this way, the alleged process of its creation is added to the stories of three different crimes reflected in the work and proclaimed by the actors at the beginning of the performance.

The abundance and intensity of media used in the performance blurs the line between what we see live and what we see through the screen’s “filter”. The creators of the performance manipulate combinations of live video and previously captured material. Dziardziel Krzysztof stated that, almost the entire action has been moved to a flat screen. For almost the entire performance, the actors were invisible or saw only parts of their bodies – viewers were forced to look at a huge screen that projected images from the rooms on stage at the time. I got the impression that we are in a cinema that is being made here and now [...]. The image displayed on the large screen allows the viewer to see events better at a glance, but at the same time shapes the perspective of the gaze, without allowing for the traditional theatre opportunity to choose which character to watch, or whether to follow the secondary or the main action. “Throughout the performance, under the slogan ‘Image is everything,’ Twarkowski is trying to prove to us that the truth is impossible to see. It cannot be known, touched, understood or explained. The truth becomes a mysterious witness known only to those concerned, in other words, only a witnesses to this particular event. Everything is based on intuition and the others word, the ‘facts’ of the media and what the media needs. At the same time, it is argued what kind of reality we have today, how we live and act, how the media affects what we think and do, and finally what a beastly nature man has.”

Scenographer Fabien Lede suggested for the scenery of this complex narrative – constructions that point to the apartment space, the club corridor, actress Marie Trintignant’s rehearsal space, and more. All the stories have one thing in common – all the tragedies and murders took place during holidays and parties. Cantat committed the crime after returning from the party on Count Šemeta’s wedding night. Vitas Luck was also characterized by a tendency to bohemian entertainment. As if offering to join the action on stage, and perhaps question the beast inside each spectator, the director and the whole creative team offer the audience the atmosphere and mood of a party, a club. Musical solutions and lighting effects in some parts of the performance move the audience into a mesmerizing atmosphere. After the premiere performances, probably after assessing the need of the audience, several performances were seen to offer a dance space. The performance is enriched with various visual elements. “Such a multifaceted vision places new demands on the viewer, because he must learn to see anew. You need to be able to see multiple actions at once and choose for yourself which is foreground and which is background. Peripheral vision also needs to be developed. The specific ‘transformations’ of optics are ironically discussed by the actors themselves in the introductory part of the play.”
The selected scenographic objects aim to respond to the main symbols of all three stories. Most of the visual details and scenographic solutions seem to be devoted to the story of Vitas Luckus: the totem of a lion, the use of photographs, and in general the decision to offer the viewer two perspectives – a real image and a live stream. Lighting reminiscent of a space for developing photos, in which frightening-looking characters emerge as if in a hunt, all suggest the central figure of “The Bear.” The screens create the impression of more intense participation, as they present the scene from different perspectives and open up even those spaces that are usually invisible to the viewer.

The keywords of the adaptation could be: documentary; reflection of the truth; and manipulation of the information obtained. Polish theater critic Magda Piekarska compares significant aspects of the work of Twarkowski and Mérimée at the time. According to her, they are both boldly questioning a land unknown to them, the stories of its people. “[…] There is a lot of audacity in this – the director from Poland arrives in the Lithuanian capital to relate the scariest local legend to its inhabitants, while mocking that the only reason a group of French filmmakers arrived ten years ago was that Vilnius seems to be the cheapest city in Europe in which to make cinema. In this way, the director repeats Mérimée, and wrote about the people living in Lithuania and the crossbreeds of bears although he knew about this country only from stories.” Of course, such a comparison is only partially correct, because in the nineteenth century, access to news of current affairs from various distant lands was very limited. On the other hand, although the media are so well developed in the present time, they contain a great deal of both deliberately and unconsciously misleading information which attempts to manipulate people.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Adaptation/ authors</th>
<th>Media/Genre/ Style</th>
<th>Relation to text/type of adaptation</th>
<th>Narrative analysis</th>
<th>Intermedial dialogue</th>
<th>Intercultural dialogue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The Bear” (LNOBT, 2000), director J. Jurašas, composer B. Kutavičius, libretto by A. M. Sluckaitė-Jurašienė</td>
<td>Media: theatre/two-act contemporary opera/music drama</td>
<td>Author’s interpretation</td>
<td>The adaptation retains the basic elements of the narrative structure. Type of adaptation: analogy (Wagner), borrowing (Andrew), corrections (Leitch), colonization (Leitch)</td>
<td>The adaptation into an opera enables the advancement of the ethnographic and cultural aspects of the work to be conveyed through a collage of different musical narratives.</td>
<td>Without abandoning the mystification of the main event, the adaptation updates and corrects the historical circumstances and the qualitative level of the culture of the period depicted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre: mythological Style: expressionism</td>
<td>Genre: mythological Style: expressionism</td>
<td>Type of adaptation: analogy (Wagner), borrowing (Andrew), corrections (Leitch), colonization (Leitch)</td>
<td>The characters and images of the characters are partly altered (more space is given to the character of the one-eyed Old Woman who is a sorceress of the forest; Julija adopts a more humble image from the light-hearted maiden of the manor, which is associated with a bird). The ending is altered: instead of the Count disappearing, he dies a grotesque death.</td>
<td>The composer employs a wide range of musical motifs and styles: from the polonaise played on the wedding stage, harpsichord sounds, the evangelical chorale used for the ceremony, to Samogitian rations in the manner of folk musicians. The scenographic solutions – projections, costume – contribute to the creation of an intersection between the real and the mystical, the civilized and the uncivilized (in this case pagan).</td>
<td>The changes are not effected by means of historical reconstruction, but by abandoning and thus denying some of the features of our region highlighted by Mérimée. Another method is to transfer all the uncivilized, negative qualities into several characters representing the old pagan culture.</td>
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CONCLUSIONS

The narrative analysis of the adaptations of Prosper Mérimée’s “The Bear” reveals two themes in his work: the adaptations interpret the idea of man-beast, expressed through the character Count Šemeta, and the land of the Žemaitija region and the intersection of cultures is reflected through the character of Professor Wittembach. Narrative and comparative analysis of adaptations and conceptual categories proposed by adaptation theorists allow us to demonstrate how isolated topics are loaded with new meanings. The adaptations of Mérimée’s work are characterized by a different degree of interpretation – from moderate following of the text to a deconstructive reading of it and reconstruction for another space-time. According to the categories and types of adaptations emphasized in adaptation studies, the group of analyzed adaptations include a wide context from the corrections type of Leitch’s (Kutavičius, Jurašas) to the starting point of authorial, intertextual adaptation, for which the work is only one of the sources (Twarkowski).

The alteration in media, genre, and style in the case of different adaptations reveals several essential elements related to the general trends in the...
development of literary adaptations. These alterations include: transformation of a textual work into the language of other media and its tools (Jurašas), or into another cultural, historical (Twarkowski) context. Different media provide an opportunity to reveal and emphasize selected aspects of the work. For example: to reveal the intersection of cultures in Mérimée’s work, using different musical narratives (Kutavičius) and to transfer and update the writer’s work in the 21st century with the help of media and intertextual circumstances (Twarkowski).

References

Dziardziel, Krzysztof. “Šiuolaikinis teatras, arba kinas intertextual circumstances (Twarkowski).


Kultūros barai


Notes


6 Aušra Marija Sluckaitė-Jurašienė, Spektaklių ir sapnų klavyrai (Vilnius: Kultūros barai, 2016), 434.

7 Ibid.


12 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ondine Inc, “Bronius Kutavičius. „Lokys”.

16 Jankauskiene-Jasinskaitė, Pagoniškasis avantgardizmas. Teoriniai Broniaus Kutavičiaus, 236.

17 Ibid., 235.

18 Ibid., 236.

19 Sluckaitė-Jurašienė, Spektaklių ir sapnų klavyrai, 440.


21 Ibid.


Adaptacijų tyrimai rodo, kad to paties kūrinio naratyvas gali būti pritaikytas skirtingoms medijoms ir / ar kontekstams. Analizuojant adaptacijas, galima pastebėti tiek kino, tiek teatro kontekste neretai pasitaikančias diskusijas apie tai, koks ryšys sieja su literatūra – dialogiškas ar konfliktiškas. Nors šios diskusijos vis dar dominuoja daugelyje tekstų, nemaža dalis autorių pritaria, kad esama reikšmingų ryšių tarp sukurto to paties kūrinio naratyvo adaptacijų. Pavyzdžiui, Regina Schober adaptacijas įvardija kaip „besiformuojančių ryšių procesą“. Toks apibrėžimas nurodo tiek į kuriamą ryšį tarp literatūros šaltinio ir jo adaptacijos kitoje medijoje, tiek ir į kitų adaptacijų, sukurtų toje pačioje ar skirtingose medijose, ryšius bei naratyvo transformavimo galimybes kultūriniose kontekstuose. Išsamiai tirti pasirinktas P. Merimė kūrinys – novelė „Lokys“, kuriamo jungiant fikcinius ir realius dalykus reflektuojama XIX amžiaus Lietuva. Šis kūrinys skirtingais laikotarpiais sulaukė įvairių kino, teatro menininkų dėmesio iš skirtingų šalių. Dėl šios priežasties kūrinio adaptacijos atskleidžia ne tik individualus režisierų interpretacijų variantus, bet gali parodyti požiūrį į kūrinio naratyvą, kurioje vaizduojama to meto Lietuva, žemaitijos kraštą. Atvejų analizėse konstatuojamas santykis su pirmuoju tekstu; tiriamas medijos įrankių panaudojimas interpretuojant tekstinių pasakojimą kiekvienoje adaptacijoje; vertinamas intertekstualumas, pastebėta sąsajas (taip pat skirtumus).

Reikšminiai žodžiai: adaptacija, Prosperas Merimė, teatras, opera, intermedijalumas, intertekstualumas.

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Miglė MUNDERZBAKAITĖ
Miglė Munderzbakaitė PhD in Humanities (Theatre Studies), is a lecturer at Theater Studies Department, Faculty of Arts, Vytautas Magnus University. Research interests: theater and cinema history, theory, criticism; theory of adaptation in different media. Since 2012 has written articles (reviews, interviews) for Lithuanian art/cultural press and internet websites.

E-mail: migle.munderzbakaite@vdu.lt